

Today's News - Thursday, February 18, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: We'll be blowing out birthday candles later to celebrate ANN's launch 14 years ago - today!!! Also, please note that tomorrow and Monday will be no-newsletter days - we'll be back Tuesday, February 23.

- ANN feature: As water mains burst, gas mains explode, drinking water is poisoned by lead, bridges collapse, and trains derail, Gisolfi ponders permanent infrastructure: What would be required, and when will we respond to this compelling need for change?
- Hawthorne parses Goldstein's gift of Lautner's "gravity-defying" house to LACMA.
- Walker walks us through Lautner's Sheats-Goldstein residence with some amazing photos and a healthy dose of humorous attitude ("The neighbors must be relieved it's being turned into a museum" - we want the hats!).
- King cheers efforts to ensure that FLW's only San Francisco building and interior are preserved: it is "like no other building in the city - or the nation - and this architectural treasure deserves the strongest protections we can offer."
- A great round-up of Frank Lloyd Wright-isms and interviews: The Guggenheim is "going to make the Metropolitan look like a Protestant barn."
- Dittmar gets behind Krier's proposal for a new concert hall in London that "beats Boris's commercial opportunism. Hopefully his counterproposal will be considered as the uplifting proposition that it surely is."
- Lam considers concrete, "often cast as the villain - synonymous with mean, polluted cities," but "there may be a time when concrete could again be considered beautiful - and even poetic."
- There's a "unique NIMBY battle" going on in Houston, where plans for a botanic garden by West 8 have "some residents seeing red, not green."
- An urgent plea goes out to save Dadaist Schwitters' severely storm-damaged Merzbarn in Cumbria, U.K.
- Ten are now in the running for a new £80 million museum of modern art in Berlin - they're anonymous, for now, but there are pix.
- An impressive shortlist of five now vying to "improve facilities at one of England's 'best' churches."
- One we couldn't resist: a re-named off-ramp in Virginia proves "it's a Trekkie's world; we're all just living in it."
- Weekend diversions:
- Wright says the Betsky-curated Shenzhen Urbanism\Architecture Bi-City Biennale is well worth the trip - especially via "the sci-fi Metro."
- In "Beauty - Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial," there's "little that you could call mind-bogglingly beautiful. It looks as if it was determined by committee. That's a weakness, but it's a strength, too."
- "Errors, Estrangement, Messes and Fictions" explores "the creative output of four young L.A. architects" in a "decidedly uncurated show" (and that's the point).
- In London, Ibsen's "The Master Builder" is a must-see, especially "if you are depressed by your lowly place in the architectural world, or if you're terrified that your shine will soon wear off. You will find it medicinal; a kind of tonic - it should cheer you immensely."
- Holland reflects on "Slow Manifesto: Lebbeus Woods Blog": it "serves as a record of a remarkable mind, still thinking, still moving through ideas until the end."
- Therrien minces no words about Ratti and Claudel's "Open Source Architecture": it's "a mutation of the classic heroic architecture myth - a manifesto," and "presents an antiquated model, underestimating the present and thereby underselling the future, the capital sin of a manifesto."
- Morley cheers Beanland's "Concrete Concept" that "demonstrates the unexpected serenity of some of the world's greatest Brutalist buildings" with "light, cheerful photographs and an accessible, tongue-and-cheek commentary - not at all what you'd expect."
- Eyefuls of some of the world's most spectacular government buildings in "Reflections: Government" - "they all have one thing in common: They're wonderful to behold."

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INSIGHT: The Case for Permanent Infrastructure: Water mains burst, gas mains explode, drinking water is poisoned by lead, bridges collapse, roads break down, vehicles collide, and trains derail. Are these the systems we want? What would be required, and when will we respond to this compelling need for change? By Peter Gisolfi - ArchNewsNow.com

LACMA gets gravity-defying John Lautner-designed home featured in 'The Big Lebowski': Lautner...produced a number of strikingly unorthodox, gravity-defying houses...For pure drama, few can match the 1963 Sheats-Goldstein house...[James F. Goldstein's] bequest...includes an endowment of \$17 million for a maintenance fund, as well as a so-called skyspace artwork by James Turrell... By Christopher Hawthorne [images]- Los Angeles Times

The Porn House From "The Big Lebowski" Has Been Donated to a Museum: For design nerds, the Sheats-Goldstein residence is well-known as one of the most triumphant works of...John Lautner...for everybody else, it's known as Jackie Treehorn's house... (The neighbors must be relieved it's being turned into a museum.) By Alissa Walker [images]- Gizmodo

S.F. move to protect interior of Frank Lloyd Wright building: ...140 Maiden Lane...facade is distinctive enough, but inside is Wright's masterstroke...architecture buffs want to spell out what details must be protected before the next occupant starts making plans...like no other building in the city - or the nation - and this architectural treasure deserves the strongest protections we can offer. By John King [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Frank Lloyd Wright on Arrogance: "Any man who really has faith in himself will be dubbed arrogant by his fellows": The Guggenheim is "going to make the Metropolitan look like a Protestant barn." - Blank on Blank / PBS

Just because the Powell & Moya site is available doesn't mean it's the right place for a concert hall: London should think carefully about where to build its newest cultural venue. And Leon Krier's Regent's Park proposal beats Boris's commercial opportunism...Hopefully his counterproposal will be considered as the uplifting proposition that it surely is. By Hank Dittmar [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Concrete Developments: Our cities have been constructed with concrete...often cast as the villain - synonymous with mean, polluted cities that are gobbling resources and have snuffed out nature. But...the future could be green...there may be a time when concrete could again be considered beautiful - and even poetic. By Elsa Lam -- Ronald Rael/Emerging Objects; Brandon Clifford/Matter Design; Filippo Gabbiani/Kokai Studios; Public Work; Ken Greenberg - Canadian Architect

Meet the beautiful botanic garden that has some Houston residents seeing red, not green: Houston, do we really have a problem? From golf course to botanic garden: A unique NIMBY battle...the "benign neglect" of the less-than-pristine golf course has turned it into an urban wildlife sanctuary...a decaying golf course slowly being reclaimed by nature. -- West 8 [images]- Mother Nature Network

Storm leaves Kurt Schwitters' Merzbarn 'near total collapse': The last remaining Merzbau project of pioneering Dadaist has been left 'devastated' by Storm Desmond: Owners of the site in Elterwater, Cumbria have called on Arts Council England and Tate director Nicholas Serota to urgently rescue the unfinished 1940s architectural installation... [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Winners in £80m Berlin gallery ideas contest revealed: Ten anonymous, winning schemes have been announced in the ideas competition for a new £80 million museum of modern art in Berlin...expected to be named within the next few days... [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Five architects shortlisted for Bristol church contest: ...£15 million competition to improve facilities at one of England's "best" churches...St Mary Redcliffe... -- Carmody Groarke; dRMM; Eric Parry; Purcell; Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios - BD/Building Design (UK)

Warp Drive: This pun was simply waiting to come to life, and one defense contractor made it so: While it may not come as a shock that the company nerds requested the new science fiction monicker, what is surprising is that the city was cool with it...it's a Trekkie's world, we're all just living in it. [images]- Atlas Obscura

Shenzhen Urbanism\Architecture Bi-City Biennale 2015: Herbert Wright travels to the Aaron Betsky-curated event, finding it well worth the trip, even just to see where China's unprecedented urbanisation has led...But to see the alternatives it could lead to, anywhere, take the sci-fi Metro ride out to UABB. [images]- DesignCurial / Blueprint Magazine (UK)

"Beauty - Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial" Offers a Bold Look at 'Beauty': ...a mixed, visually cacophonous bag...whether not everything in it qualifies as incontrovertibly beautiful, it's an exciting opportunity to meditate on the perennially confounding questions: What is beauty? And what is it good for? There's little that you could call mind-bogglingly beautiful...It looks as if it was determined by committee. That's a weakness, but it's a strength, too.- New York Times

Los Angeles Exhibition Explores the Thrilling Early Years of an Architect: "Errors, Estrangement, Messes and Fictions" evaluates the creative output of four young L.A. architects...the decidedly uncurated show...explores the theme of early influences in a young architect's career... "I thought 'early career retrospective' was an appropriate oxymoron and curatorial strategy," Hadrian Predock explains. By Janelle Zara -- Laurel Broughton; Andrew Kovacs; Anna Neimark; Andrew Atwood [images]- Metropolis Magazine

"The Master Builder" – the dizzy heights of architectural glory: A new production of Henrik Ibsen's play, starring Ralph Fiennes, is likely to resonate with architects in the audience: ...if you are depressed by your lowly place in the architectural world, or if you're terrified that your shine will soon wear off...go and see this play immediately. You will find it medicinal; a kind of tonic - it should cheer you immensely. - The Architects' Journal (UK)

Lebbeus Woods: Blogger: Charles Holland reflects on Woods' curious online presence: In his perceptive introduction...Christopher Hawthorne discerns a conservative strand to Woods's writing that was somewhat at odds with the drawn work... "Slow Manifesto: Lebbeus Woods Blog" serves as a record of a remarkable mind, still thinking, still moving through ideas until the end. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Prometheus Unfounded: Troy Conrad Therrien says "Open Source Architecture" by Carlo Ratti with Matthew Claudel is a mutation of the classic heroic architecture myth: ...this is a manifesto...For a book published in 2015, it presents an antiquated model, underestimating the present and thereby underselling the future, the capital sin of a manifesto.- The Architect's Newspaper

Five Masterpieces That Changed the Face of Brutalism: Brick-like new tome "Concrete Concept: Brutalist Buildings Around the World" by Christopher Beanland demonstrates the unexpected serenity of some of the world's greatest Brutalist buildings: ...light, cheerful photographs and an accessible, tongue-and-cheek commentary - not at all what you'd expect from a book about buildings that were emphatic demonstrations of severity, abstraction and an ideologically specific ambition. By Madeleine Morley -- William Pereira; Susanne Gross; Fritz Wotruba; Erling Viksjø; Moshe Safdie- AnOther Magazine (UK)

The World's Most Spectacular Government Buildings: The government buildings in "Reflections: Government"...come from six different continents and were built at various times over the past 1,000 years. But they all have one thing in common: They're wonderful to behold. [images]- Slate



Álvaro Siza: Auditorium Theatre, Barcelona, Spain: ...located northeast of the urban fabric of the town of Llinars del Vallès...The complex is part of a larger plan for the adjacent public land... By Kirsten Kiser [images]

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